

MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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MOS NEWSLETTER

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Those who missed the fall meeting of MOS please note the above listing of new officers, elected by acclamation on 23 October, in a general meeting of the membership.

Since election of officers has usually taken place during the Spring meeting, it is unclear at this time whether election time has been moved forward on a regular basis.

We express our warmest thanks to outgoing officers: Nona Herbert, Marita Smith, Steven Peterson, and Terrie Gates.

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DUES DUES DUES DUES DUES DUES

Dues are paid for the calendar year, and it is that time again. Ed Alexander writes that "I am trying to get out books in order. In the hustle and bustle of our meeting in Waveland, I evidently have omitted some people who gave me checks for dues because I ended up with too much money. I was very careful to list everyone giving cash so that's no problem. When you send out the newsletter please include a BIG note to ask those who gave me checks on that night to please drop me a card."

A reminder on the membership categories: Life: \$100.00, Sustaining: \$20.00 or more, Active: \$10.00, Corresponding: \$10.00., Library Subscriptions: \$10.00, Junior (under 17) and Golden Age (over 65): \$4.00.

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MOS Fall Meeting: Judging from the record turnout for the fall meeting, which was held at Waveland, Hancock County on 23 and 24 October, 1982 it must be assumed that everybody likes to bird on the coast, regardless of the distance involved.

More than 80 members participated in the Saturday field trips, assigned in small groups for maximum birding satisfaction. When the day had ended 126 species were tallied for the day. Among the most exciting finds were Anhinga, Osprey, Merlin, Reddish Egret, Virginia Rail, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and Clay-colored Sparrow.

Clay-colored Sparrow, while having been seen many times by many observers in the state, had not been documented by collection or photograph. Terrie Gates and Louis Cashman both aimed a camera at this unusually cooperative species, securing the needed evidence of its presence here.

Field-trip leaders on Saturday deserve kudos for a job well done; they were John Izral, Terrie Gates, Larry Gates, Ray Russell, Linda Austin, Harriet Wessel, Charliene Roemer, Jan Dubuisson, Judy Toups.

The banquet room was filled to capacity on Saturday night...the food was merely passable despite assurances that it would be better. But birders come to talk birds and watch birds, and have a philosophical view, thank goodness, towards food, both good food and bad food.

The program was the thing. Those who have never birded in the marvelous places known as the Mexican Mountains in southeast Arizona were treated to a slide presentation of the birds and the scenery of Arizona, courtesy of Terrie and Larry Gates. It was enough to make one want to start packing immediately and go in search of trogons, flycatchers, and buntings. Those of us who had been to Arizona were no less enraptured...its one place in the United States that deserves as many return visits as possible.

Sunday birding was disappointing. After traveling by car for a distance considerably greater than originally estimated by yours truly, we found the day cold, the wind up, and the birds generally in absentia. But as is true of Jackson County, there is always a good bird or two to make the adrenalin run and force us to take our hands out of warm pockets. In this case it was a Peregrine Falcon and a flock of White Pelicans, seen unfortunately after all but the most intrepid die-hards had left with Larry Gates, headed for Bellefontaine Beach.

Those who did not follow Larry and Terrie in search of a good bird missed a VERY good bird, one lone Groove-billed Ani which sat still as instructed until all of the Gates' group had seen it.

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Request to all CBC Compilers: Please send me pertinent details and whatever comments are appropriate, or even inappropriate, about your particular CBC. I confess to having failed miserably in my follow-through last year....you see, somebody did me a "favor" and cleaned my office while I was out birding last January and there are still things I cannot find. As the ancient Greeks might have said, especially if they "dug" chaos in their life "beware of kids bearing vacuum cleaners and trash bags".

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News Department: On October 24, upon arriving back in Hattiesburg, Larry and Terrie Gates went directly to the fabled sewage lagoons and promptly located a Red Phalarope for Nona and J. C. Herbert and Bo Boswell. I had my bags packed the next morning when Larry called to say it was gone. Should anyone else have the good fortune to locate one of this species, hold it under house arrest and call me collect!

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Not to be outdone by the fascinating birds at the Hattiesburg Ponds, Hancock County on the coast is fast becoming a legend in its own time. On October 27th two White-tailed Kites were found at Port Bienville Industrial Park. As of December 8 they were still there. Also a perfect Krider's Red-tailed Hawk.

Among other exciting news, Evelyn Johnson of Biloxi has located an active Bald Eagle nest. As most of us are aware, the one pair of eagles of which we had knowledge were done out of their long-time nesting site by wind, fire, and lightning. For at least two years they have been seen frequently, but no one had knowledge of a new nest site. The exact location cannot be divulged at this time. As an interesting aside to this wonderful news about our eagles, local wildlife officials have been informed of this discovery and have shown little or no interest in seeing the nest.

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Seems that it would be much easier to protect the birds if those charged with such things knew where to look. Both eagles have been observed at the nest and it is believed that incubation of eggs is now taking place.

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A revised bird checklist "A Checklist of Birds in the Tennessee Valley Region" is available free from: TVA, Information Services, Division of Land and Forest Resources, Norris, Tennessee 37828.

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Jerry Jackson, George Kulesza, Opal Dakin, and Steve Sibley from Mississippi State, and Frank Moore from the University of Southern Mississippi represented the state at the 100th anniversary meeting of the American Ornithologists Union in Chicago 11-14 October.

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Several hundred Starlings have been banded and color-banded at Mississippi State during the past year by Opal Dakin has part of her doctoral dissertation research on the behavioral ecology of Starlings. If you should see a color-banded Starling, please note the colors and positions of the bands and send as much detail concerning the observation as possible to: Opal Dakin, Department of Biological Sciences, Box GY, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS 39762. A copy of your report should also be sent to: Bird Banding Laboratory, Office of Migratory Bird Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, Laurel, MD 20708. (Note that the colors used include light and dark shades of blue and green and that position of the bands relative to the aluminum band is important.)

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A Common Tern, found dead (no immediate injury noted) north of Long Beach, Harrison County, MS was tagged on both wings, color-banded on its right leg and aluminum banded on its left leg. Preliminary information, after calls by Jerry Jackson to Washington D.C., and the Canadian Wildlife Service, indicates that this tern was banded last summer in Toronto, Ontario, by Hans Blochpoel, a wildlife biologist who is conducting a study on Common Terns. The specimen has been preserved in my freezer over the objections of numerous family members until cause of death may be determined.

Despite the number of birds which each of us sees every year, very few marked birds seem to be discovered. It becomes very interesting and personal when such a bird is seen...those involved in studies are so appreciative for any information they might receive about birds they have banded, or tagged, or color dyed.

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Birders on the Gulf Coast should be on the lookout for color-banded Snowy Plovers. Details of any observations of marked birds should be sent to: Jerry Jackson, Box Z, Mississippi State, MS 39762, and to the Bird Banding Laboratory (address above).

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New members: Among recent new members we would like to welcome the following; Carolyn Jarnagin, Corinth, MS, Kevin Howe and Betsy Washington, Ocean Springs, MS, and Jan Dubuisson, Gulfport, MS.

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Our congratulations to Ray Weeks and Thelma Barnes who were married recently in Columbus, also to Steve Peterson and Carole Pope who set up nest-keeping in August.

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This editor recently conducted a bird-identification course with 22 participants. All of them profess to be "hooked", at least seven of them have purchased spotting scopes to underscore that fact. There is little doubt that the coastal areas have not been birded to their full potential, but that is about to change. Why not try doing the

same thing in your own area, especially if there are so few birders that you find yourself viewing a rare bird and there's no one to share it with.

Larry and Terrie Gates conducted a course through the University of Southern Mississippi this fall; Steve Peterson has done so under the auspices of the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science in Jackson.

But museum or university affiliation is not necessary. All that is necessary is a thorough knowledge of your own birding area and competence in identification. We can transmit knowledge through doing...getting people out into the field for their first look at birds which seldom appear in backyards. If they react as did my recent group we could triple the number of birders in Mississippi.

For those of you who might be interested in sharing your experience, I thought I might offer the game plan I used to make birders out of 22 raw recruits.

Course: 8 weeks, one night of class work each week, all day field trip on Saturdays. Cost \$35.00 per person (it pays for the gas). Carpool to locations, bring lunch and sense of humor.

During the first two field trips my students had trouble using binoculars and finding the birds...during the next two weeks they were adept at finding birds and agonizing over the identification of fall warblers...during weeks 5 and 6 certain of them were arguing over the identification of female Redhead and double-checking the leader on the fine points of identification of Western Sandpiper. By the eighth week they were calling birds in flight and recognizing call notes.

They got so tuned in and turned on to birds that once the class had ended they agreed among themselves to bird as a group, without me as a leader, at least once a month.

Meanwhile, there are 28 people waiting for the next class to begin in the spring.

I urge each of you to consider conducting a class for beginners. It is a thoroughly satisfying experience.

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Keeping a year list for 1982? If so, I'd be interested in hearing the results of a year of intensive birding within Mississippi. It's expected that a reasonably active birder should see two-thirds of all birds on the state list in a year. Anything beyond that is great! Let's all try for good year lists in 1983!!

Send me all news of birds and birding for future newsletters, please. And have a great CBC, a most joyful Christmas, and more birds in 1983 than you saw in 1982. Cheers!!!